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THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME! I SUPPOSE YOU WANT ANOTHER GRIZZLY TALE FROM MY PRIVATE COLLECTION HERE IN THE *VAULT OF HORROR*, EH? WELL, I HAVE A *SHARP* ONE FOR YOU THIS TIME! IT'S ABOUT A *CORPSE* WHO WANTED TO KNOW IF HE SHOULD PAY INCOME TAX CONSIDERING THE *STATE* HE WAS IN! HEH, HEH! NO - I'M ONLY FOOLING! THE STORY I'M ABOUT TO TELL CONCERNS A *VAUDEVILLE ACT*, AND I THINK YOU'LL ENJOY IT! IT'S TITLED...

ONE LAST FLING!

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE KNIVES THUDDED WITH UNERRING ACCURACY INTO THEIR SPINNING TARGET, AND THE MASS OF AWED SPECTATORS GASPED WITH EVERY THROW. THE LITTLE THEATRE IN VEIDERHOFF, HUNGARY, WAS JAMMED TO OVER-FLOWING - AND THE AMERICAN *KNIFE-THROWING* ACT WAS KNOCKING 'EM DEAD!

WHEN THE LAST KNIFE HAD BEEN THROWN, HARRY BELL RELEASED HIS WIFE OLGA FROM THE WHIRLING DISC.. AND TOGETHER THEY GRATEFULLY BOWED TO THE APPLAUSE THAT FILLED THE THEATRE

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

THEY LIKED US, HARRY!

I'M GLAD! THAT WAS OUR LAST SHOWING HERE! TOMORROW WE LEAVE FOR PARIS, SO LET'S GO TO THE HOTEL AND GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

PROPS

SLEEP CAME EASILY FOR THE TWO WEARY TROUPERS.. IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON WHEN HARRY SLEEPILY OPENED HIS EYES..

HEY, HONEY.. WAKE UP! OLGA, WAKE UP! *OLGA!* HEY, WHAT TH..? SHE'S...SHE'S SO *PALE!*

GOOD LORD! SHE'S DEAD!

HARRY'S EYES BRIMMED WITH TEARS AND HE SLUMPED BESIDE THE BED, HIS BODY WRACKED WITH GRIEF..

OLGA, HONEY.. *HONEY!* WHAT'LL I DO WITHOUT YOU? (SOB)

FOR A LONG WHILE HARRY REMAINED BY HIS WIFE'S LIFELESS FORM..AND AFTER HIS SORROW WAS SPENT, HE LEFT THE HOTEL TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR HER BURIAL! IT WAS MID-EVENING WHEN HE RETURNED..

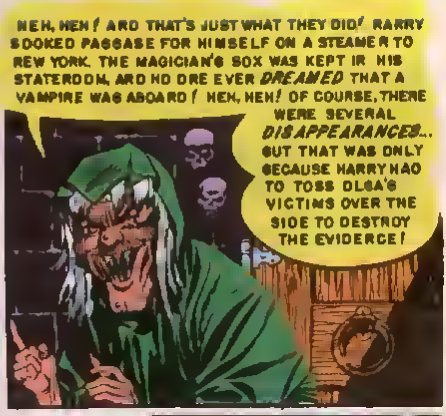
WELL.. EVERYTHING'S SEER READIED! I.. I.. SURE WILL MISS

IN MID-SENTENCE, HARRY STOPPED! HIS MOUTH DROPPED OPER IN BEWILDERMENT AND HIS EYES STARED IN DISBELIEF

WHY..SHE *SHE'S GONE!*

IN CONFUSION, HE STUMBLED ABOUT THE SMALL ROOM CALLING HIS WIFE'S NAME SUDDENLY, HE HEARD THE SOFT FLAPPING OF WINGS...
WHA...? A BAT! IT JUST FLEW IN THE WINDOW!
THE HUGE BAT FLUTTERED ITS WINGS BEFORE HIM... AND WHILE HARRY'S EYES BULGED, A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE...
OLGA!
OLGA, YOU'RE ALIVE! BUT YOU SEEM STRANGE! YOUR MOUTH IT'S COVERED WITH BLOOD.. AND YOUR NECK... THERE ARE TWO HOLES IN YOUR NECK!
HARRY.
OLGA! YOU...YOU'RE A...
YES, HARRY... I'M A VAMPIRE!
BUT... I DON'T UNDERSTAND! NOW? WHEN?
LAST NIGHT WHILE WE SLEPT! ALL I REMEMBER IS THAT I OPENED MY EYES AND SAW A BAT-LIKE CREATURE BENDING OVER ME!
EVERYTHING IS BLANK UNTIL I WOKE UP A FEW HOURS AGO AND SOMEHOW KNEW I HAD TO HAVE A VICTIM! HARRY, YOU'VE GOT TO PROTECT ME!
OF COURSE I'LL PROTECT YOU! WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE HERE THOUGH! WE'LL GO TO THE STATES!
BUT NOW, HARRY? HOW?
HMM-M... DURING THE DAY YOU'LL NEED A PLACE TO SLEEP! VAMPIRES CAN ONLY MOVE BETWEEN SUN-DOWN AND SUN-UP! YOU'LL NEED SOME SORT OF BOX TO STAY IN DURING THE DAY! I HAVE IT!
3

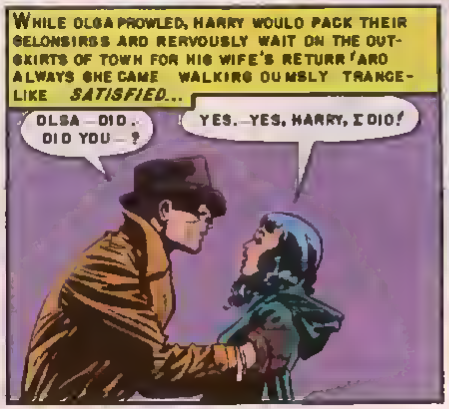
WE'LL GET ONE OF THOSE SOKES MAGICIARS USE TO 'SAW PEOPLE IR RALF!' THAT'LL BE NIG ENOUGH FOR YOU .ARD WE CAR MAKE IT PART OF OUR ACT! RO ONE WILL LOOK IRSIDE...IT'LL BE SAFE FOR YOU!


NEH, HEH! ARD THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY DID! HARRY SDOKED PASSAGE FOR HIMSELF ON A STEAMER TO REW YORK. THE MAGICIAN'S SOX WAS KEPT IR HIS STATEROOM, ARD HO DRE EVER DREAMED THAT A VAMPIRE WAS ABOARD! HEH, HEH! OF COURSE, THERE WERE SEVERAL DISAPPEARANCES... BUT THAT WAS ONLY BECAUSE HARRY HAD TO TOSS OLGA'S VICTIMS OVER THE SIDE TO DESTROY THE EVIDERCE!

HARRY'S CONSCIENCE PLAGUED HIM, BUT HE LOVED OLGA VERY MUCH.
I SHOULDN'T BE HELPING HER TO KILL..BUT IF I DON'T, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HER! I HAVE TO HELP HER...

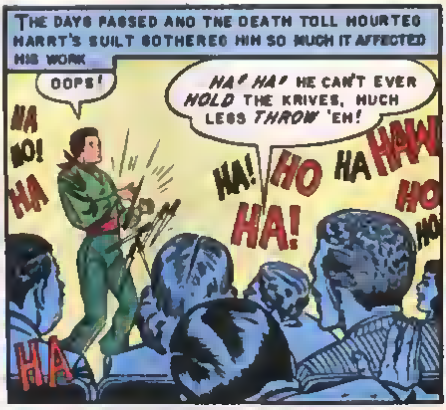
HARRY AND OLGA AVOIDED LARGE CITIES ARD TRAVELED BY TRAILER, PLAYIRG 'ONE-NIGHT STANDS' IR THE SMALL TOWRS ARD VILLAGES...

BUT IN EVERY TOWN
OLGA, PLEASE! MUST YOU GO TONIGHT?
YES, HARRY.. I HEED NOURISHMENT. I'LL MEET YOU WHERE!


WHILE OLGA PROWLED, HARRY WOULD PACK THEIR BELONGIRGS ARD RERVOUSLY WAIT ON THE OUT-SKIRTS OF TOWN FOR HIS WIFE'S RETURR 'ARD ALWAYS SHE CAME WALKIRG DUMBLY TRANCE-LIKE SATISFIED...
OLGA—DID..DID YOU—?
YES..YES, HARRY, I DID!

ARD AS SOOR AS SHE WAS SAFELY LOCKED IR HER 'COFFIN', HARRY WOULD WHISK THEM AWAY INTO THE NEXT TOWN .TO THE NEXT VICTIM...

HEADLINES ACROSS THE NATION ROARED THE NEWS OF EACH NEW VAMPIRE KILLING, BUT OLGA AND HARRY SEEMED TO LEAD A CHARMED LIFE THAT AROUSED NO SUSPICION...
AAAGGH!
HHH!


THE DAYS PASSED AND THE DEATH TOLL MOUNTED HARRY'S GUILT BOTHERED HIM SO MUCH IT AFFECTED HIS WORK...
OOPS!
HA! HA! HE CAN'T EVER HOLD THE KNIVES, MUCH LESS THROW 'EM!
HA HA
NO!
HA!
HO
HA
HAW
HA!
HO
HA
HO

OLGA, I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE! IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE! YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS ABOUT MURDER!
YES, HARRY!

ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS SATISFYING SOME IRSANE DESIRE, NO MATTER WHAT THE COST! BUT I'M HUMAN! I CAN'T TAKE IT!
YES, HARRY!

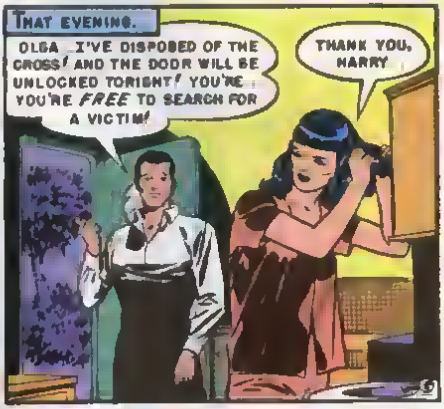
WE'VE GOT TO STOP! WE DON'T HAVE ANY BOOKINGS FOR TWO NIGHTS, SO I WANT YOU TO TRY TO STOP!
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HARRY?

I'M GOING TO LOCK YOU IN THE TRAILER! I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU OUT! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO MURDER ANYONE TONIGHT!
HARRY, NO! PLEASE! DON'T DO THAT TO ME! PLEASE!

I'M SORRY, OLGA! BUT I HAVE TO DO IT! I'M LOCKING THE DOOR AND I'LL KEEP THE KEY!
THAT WON'T STOP ME, HARRY! I'LL BREAK THE LOCK.. YOU KNOW THAT WON'T STOP ME!

I KNOW THE LOCK ALONE CAN'Y STOP YOU.. BUT THIE CROSS WILL! VAMPINES FEAN CNDSSES AND I'M NANGING THIS ONE NIGHT ON THE DOON!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!
THEY GLEPT AND IT WAS THE NEXT NOON WHEN HANNY AWOKE.
WHOOSH! BOY, DD I FEEL NOTTEN TODAY! KINDA WEAK! HMM..OLGA'S ETILL SLEEPING!
HANNY ARDEE AND WENT ASDUT DNEEGING HE NOTICED ND THING STNANGE UNTIL NE BEGAN SNAV-ING..
WHAY YHE..? MY HECK! YHENE ANE TWO HOLES IN MY NECK!
GOOO LORD! ENE TUNNED DN ME! SHE TOOK SOME OF MY BLOOD LAST NIGHT!
THAY EVENING, WHEN OLGA AWOKE.
OLGA! WHY? WNY DID YOU OO IT TD ME? WNY?
OH, HANNY! HANNY, I'M SONNY! I COULDN'T NELP IY I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YDU! I WON'T DD IT AGAIN.. I PNDMISE ARYWAY, I JUST TOOK...A LITTLE!
LATER THAT NIGHT..
NDW, NEMEMBEN! I'M LOCKING YOU IN AGAIN! I'M GOING TO PUT THE CNOSS DN THE DOON BUT YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE HOT TO ATTACK ME! YOU'VE GOT TO CONTROL YOUNEELF!
OH, HANNY! I PNDMIEE.. I PNDMISE!
BUT WHEN HANNY ANOSE THE NEXY MONNING
OOOON-H! I.. I FEEL WORSE THAN I DID YES-YENDAY! SO ED WEAK ..DIZZY!
6

SHE DID IT AGAIN! SHE TOOK MY BLOOD AGAIN! I...I CAN'T TRUST HER! I'LL HAVE TO GET HER FREE...OR I'LL DIE!

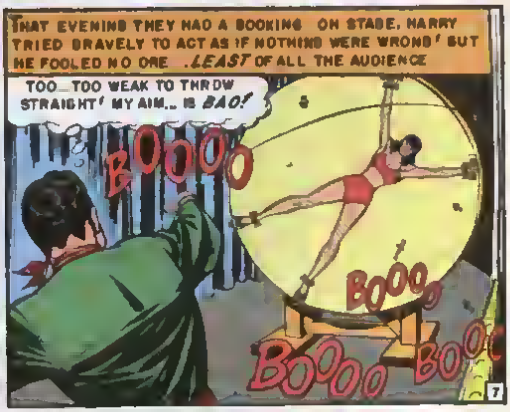

THAT EVENING.
OLGA...I'VE DISPOSED OF THE CROSS! AND THE DOOR WILL BE UNLOCKED TONIGHT! YOU'RE YOU'RE FREE TO SEARCH FOR A VICTIM!
THANK YOU, HARRY

BUT AGAIN, AS BEFORE, WHEN HARRY AWOKE THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
I...I CAN HARDLY GET OUT OF BED! WHAT'S THE MATTER? I'VE NEVER BEEN SO...SO WEAK! OLGA MUST MUST HAVE TAKEN SOME OF MY BLOOD AGAIN!

BUT THE DOOR WAS OPEN! SHE JUST DOESN'T CARE TO SEARCH FOR SOMEONE ELSE WHEN I'M SO NEAR!

OLGA CAN'T CONTROL HERSELF AT ALL! I'M NOT SAFE WITH HER ANYMORE! ANOTHER NIGHT AND I MAY BE DEAD!

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO! I'VE GOT TO DESTROY HER BEFORE SHE KILLS ME!

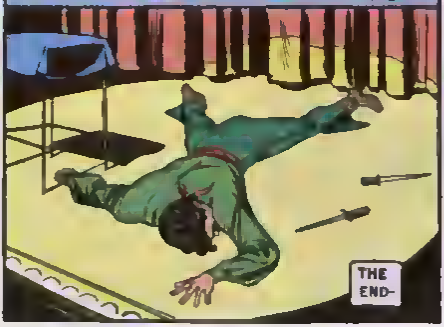

THAT EVENING THEY HAD A BOOKING ON STAGE. HARRY TRIED BRAVELY TO ACT AS IF NOTHING WERE WRONG! BUT HE FOOLED NO ONE...LEAST OF ALL THE AUDIENCE
TOO...TOO WEAK TO THROW STRAIGHT! MY AIM... IS BAD!
BOOOO
BOOOO
BOOOO
BOO

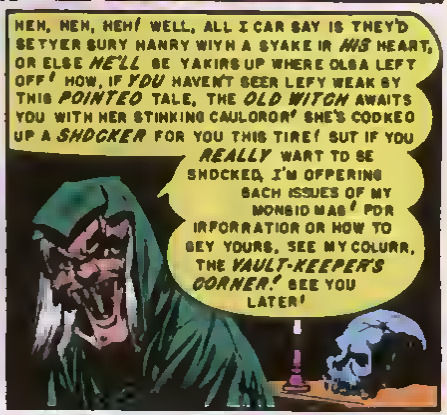
HE TURNED TO THE AUDIENCE ARO HELD UP HIS HARO FOR SILERCE! THE CROWO NOISE DIMMED . A HUSH ERVELOPED THE THEATRE. YHER...

FROM SEHIND HIS GACK, HARRY BROUGHT FORTH A SPEAR-LIKE, WEISHYED WOODER SYAKE! YHE PUZZLED AUDIENCE SAY EXPECT-ANTLY BUT AS HARRY RAISED HIS ARR ARO MUSYERED SYRENGH FOR A LASY OESPERAYE YHROW, A LOOK OF TERROR SUDDENLY CROSSED OLGA'S USUALLY PASSIVE FACE!

PETRIFIED, OLGA WATCHED AS HARRY'S ARM HURLED THE SYAKE DIRECTLY AT HER HEARY! SHE TRIED YO PREE HER-SELF YO SCREAM! BUT IY WAS TOO LATE! YHIS YIME HARRY'S AIM WAS DEADLY ACCURATE!

FOR A ROMENT YHE AUDIENCE STARED UNBELIEVING! HARRY YUARED YO THER SLOWLY WHILE A TEAR ROLLED ODWN HIS CHEEK, HE SDWED.. AND YHER COLLAPSED IR A HEAP. YHE LASY ACY WAS OVER!





THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! SO, *WHO ELSE?* IT'S *ME*, AGAIN! *THE OLD WITCH*... MISTRESS OF *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* COME IN! MY *CAULDRON* IS FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH ITS *EVIL BREW*... AND EVEN NOW IT GURGLES AND BUBBLES! ARE YOU READY FOR ME TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY *HEAPING HELPINGS* OF *HORROR?* GOOD! THEN TUCK YOUR *SHROUDS* UNDER YOUR CHINS AND I'LL BEGIN THE DELICIOUS TERROR-TIDBIT I CALL

THAT'S A 'CROC'!

LARSEN

THE GATHERED CROWD STARES INTO THE PIT IN HORROR AND FASCINATION! THE NEWEST ADDITIONS TO THE TOWN ZOO LAY BELOW THEM, SCARCELY MOVING... THEIR SLIMY SCALES GLISTENING IN THE MORNING SUN! FOUR HUGE, FEROCIOUS-LOOKING, UGLY *CROCODILES*...

DADDY! I DON'T WANT TO *LOOK!* THEY *SCARE* ME!

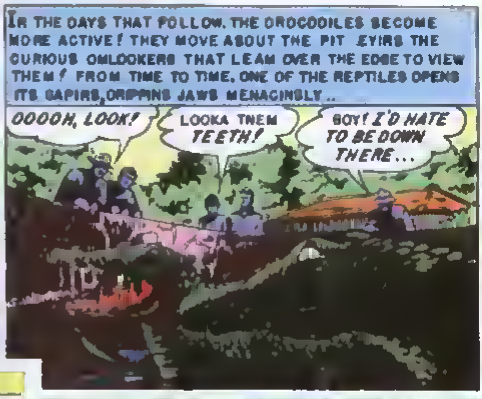
WOW! LOOKA..

GOLLY GEE! I'LL BET THEY'RE *VICIOUS!*

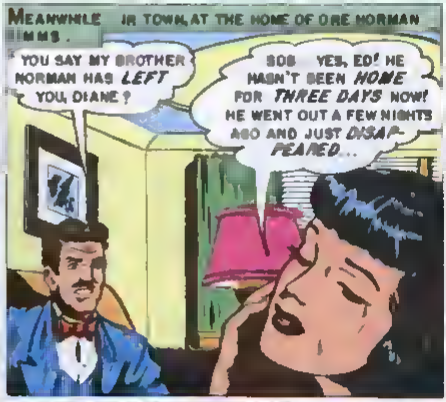
HEY! HERE COMES 'CRAZY COOGAN'. THE ZOO-KEEPER! BOY! I'LL BET HE'S PROUD OF HIR NEW CROCODILES!
YEAH! THE CRAZY OLD COOT!
HELLO, BOYS! WELL? HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW CHARRES?
HI, MR COOGAN! BOY, THEY LOOK AWFUL MEAN!
MR COORAN'S EYER OPEN WIDE AR HE WHIRPERS TO THE RATH-BRED YOURRRTERS..
MEAN? THEY'RE KILLERS! MAN-EATERS! DID YOU KROW EIGHT MEN WERE KILLED CAPTURIRR THEM
WOW!
GEE!
BOY!
THEN SUDDENLY, MR COORAN'S FACE SROWR SOFT. HE SRILES AS HE STARES OOWR INTO THE BIG CROCODILE-PIT..
RUT NOW THEY'RE ALL MINE! AREN'T THEY BEAUTIFUL?
HUH? OH, YEAH! BEAUTIFUL, MR COOGAN!
YEAH! BOR-JUS!
MR COOGAN TAKES ONE LORR WISTFUL LOOK AT THE REWLY ARRIVED REPTILER SMILES THEN MOVER OFF TO HIS OTHER CHORER! THE KIDS WATCH HIM GO..
ROY! HIS RICKNARE SURE FITS! CRAZY COOGAN!
YOU SAID IT! HE'S NUTS! HEY! RET THIS! AREN'T THEY... BE-YOO-DEE-FUL?
HAW, HAW! YEAH, CRAZY! REAL SEXY-LOOKIN!
THE RIDICULINR BOYS DRIFT OFF OOWR THE PATH LAUGHINR ARO JOKIRR AROUT RR COOGAR, THE ZOO-KEEPER! THAT EVENIRR, AFTER THE CROWD HAS GONE ARO THE ZOO-RATE IS CLOSED, MR COORAR GOES TO THE CROCODILE-PIT! HE SMILES OOWR AT THE REPTILES
REAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL CROCODILES! I'M ROINR TO TAKE SUCH GOOD CARE OF YOU THE FOUR OF YOU! I'M YOUR FRIEND!
THER MR COOGAN DISAPPEARR INTO ORE OF THE ZOO BUILDIRRR! SOON HE RETURNS WITH A PLATTER OF MEAT! HE REACHES OVER THE PIT TOSSING THE MEAT IN..
HERE YOU ARE MY FRIEROS! HERE'S YOUR SUPPER! NICE FRERH MEAT!

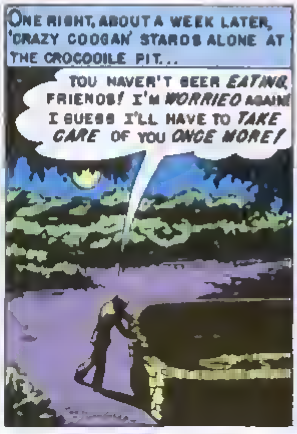
A FEW DAYS LATER, ONE OF THE YOUNGSTERS VISITS THE ZOO! HE FINDS MR. COOGAN SITTING ON THE EDGE OF THE PIT, STARING DEJECTEDLY DOWN AT THE FOUR QUIET REPTILES
S'MATTER, MR COOGAN? YOU LOOK UNHAPPY!
I AM, SONNY! IT'S MY CROCODILES! THEY REFUSE TO EAT ANYTHING! I'M WORRIED ABOUT THEM!
SEE, MR COOGAN! WHAT DO YOU THINK IS WRONG?
I DON'T KNOW! LOOK AT THEM! THEY LOOK TERRIBLE! IF THEY KEEP THIS UP, THEY'LL DIE!
GOLLY, MR COOGAN! MAYBE THEY DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU FEED THEM!
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT! I...
THE LITTLE BOY TURNS TO GO! AS HE STARTS AWAY, HE SMILES AND QUIPS...
AFTER ALL, MR COOGAN, YOU SAID YOURSELF. THEY'RE MAN-EATERS!
THAT'S RIGHT! THEY— THEY
MR COOGAN STARES AFTER THE CHILD AS HE LEAVES THE ZOO! THEN HE TURNS AND GAZES DOWN INTO THE PIT AT ITS SLIMY OCCUPANTS...
THAT'S IT! THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG! THEY'RE MAN-EATERS!
CRAZY COOGAN! LOOKS AROUND! THE ZOO IS DESERTED! HE LEANS OVER THE PIT AND WHISPERS DOWN TO THE FOUR FEROCIOUS CROCODILES
DON'T WORRY, MY FRIENDS! I PROMISED I'D TAKE CARE OF YOU! AND I WILL...
THAT NIGHT, ON A DARK EMPTY STREET IN TOWN, A SHADOWY FIGURE LURKS IN AN ALLEYWAY! UP THE BLOCK, AN UNSUSPECTING MAN MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD IT
3

LATER, 'CRAZY COOGAN' SITS ON THE EDGE OF THE CROCODILE-PIT, SMILING DOWN AT THE SORGING REPTILES...
EAT... MY FRIENDS! EAT HEARTILY!


IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, THE CROCODILES BECOME MORE ACTIVE! THEY MOVE ABOUT THE PIT EYING THE CURIOUS ONLOOKERS THAT LEAN OVER THE EDGE TO VIEW THEM! FROM TIME TO TIME, ONE OF THE REPTILES OPENS ITS GAPING, DRIPPING JAWS MENACINGLY...
OOOOH, LOOK!
LOOKA THEM TEETH!
BOY! I'D HATE TO BE DOWN THERE...

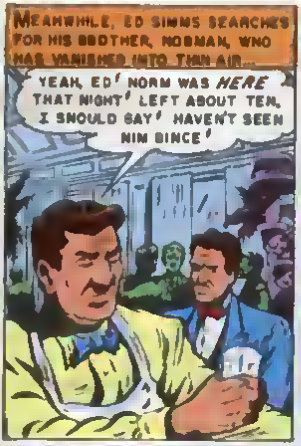
EVEN MR COOGAN WATCHES THEM PROUDLY..
HEY, MR COOGAN! YOUR CROCODILES LOOK ALL RIGHT! THEY MUST BE EATING NOW, HUH?
YES, M'BOY! THEY'RE EATING FINE, NOW!

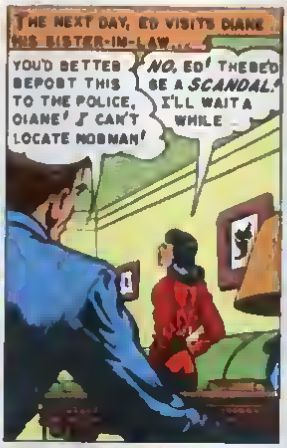

MEANWHILE IN TOWN, AT THE HOME OF ORE NORMAN SIMMS.
YOU SAY MY BROTHER NORMAN HAS LEFT YOU, DIANE?
SOB YES, ED! HE HASN'T BEEN HOME FOR THREE DAYS NOW! HE WENT OUT A FEW NIGHTS AGO AND JUST DISAPPEARED...


ONE NIGHT, ABOUT A WEEK LATER, 'CRAZY COOGAN' STANDS ALONE AT THE CROCODILE PIT...
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN EATING, FRIENDS! I'M WORRIED AGAIN! I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU ONCE MORE!

AND SO, ONCE AGAIN, IN TOWN, A SHADOWY FIGURE LURKS IN AN ALLEY ON A DESERTED STREET... AWAITING A VICTIM
AH! HERE COMES SOMEONE NOW! ANOTHER MEAL FOR MY MAN-EATERS!

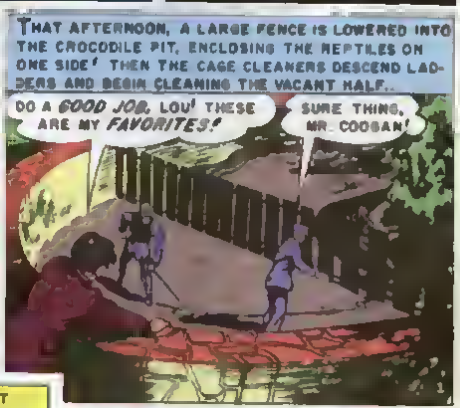
AND LATER THAT NIGHT, AS THE MOON SHEDS ITS COLD EERIE LIGHT OVER THE ZOO GROUNDS.
SEE? SEE? I TOLD YOU I WOULD TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU, MY CROCODILES!

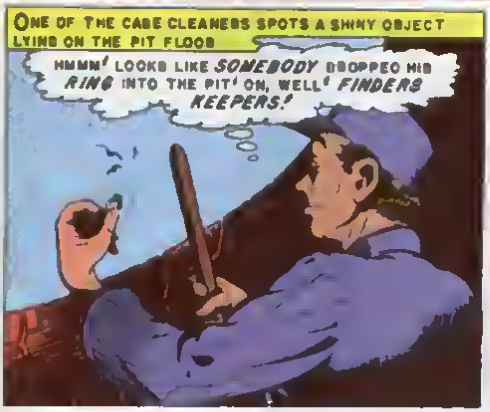

MEANWHILE, ED SIMMS SEARCHES FOR HIS BROTHER, NORMAN, WHO HAS VANISHED INTO THIN AIR...
YEAH, ED! NORM WAS HERE THAT NIGHT! LEFT ABOUT TEN, I SHOULD SAY! HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE!

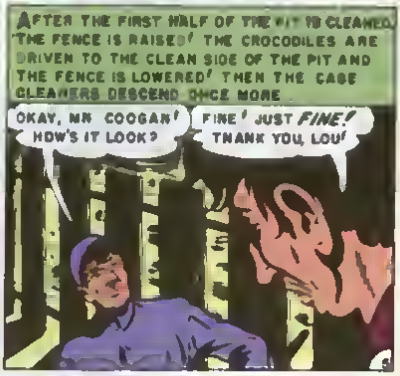

THE NEXT DAY, ED VISITS DIANE HIS SISTER-IN-LAW...
YOU'D BETTER REPORT THIS TO THE POLICE, DIANE! I CAN'T LOCATE NORMAN!
NO, ED! THERE'D BE A SCANDAL! I'LL WAIT A WHILE

WHILE AT THE ZOO...
BOY, MR COOGAN! YOUR MAN-EATERS LOOK AWFUL FERocious TODAY..
THEY ARE ACTIVE, AREN'T THEY? I'M SO GLAD THEY'RE HAPPY!

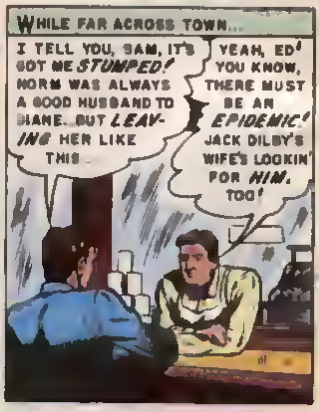
SEE! THEIR PIT'S AWFUL DIRTY, MR COOGAN! DON'T YOU CLEAN IT?
WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE CAGE CLEANERS ARE GOING TO DO IT THIS AFTERNOON!


THAT AFTERNOON, A LARGE FENCE IS LOWERED INTO THE CROCODILE PIT, ENCLOSING THE REPTILES ON ONE SIDE! THEN THE CAGE CLEANERS DESCEND LADDERS AND BEGIN CLEANING THE VACANT HALF..
DO A GOOD JOB, LOU! THESE ARE MY FAVORITES!
SURE THING, MR. COOGAN!


ONE OF THE CAGE CLEANERS SPOTS A SHINY OBJECT LYING ON THE PIT FLOOR
HMMM! LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY DROPPED HIS RING INTO THE PIT! OH, WELL! FINDERS KEEPERS!


AFTER THE FIRST HALF OF THE PIT IS CLEANED, THE FENCE IS RAISED! THE CROCODILES ARE DRIVEN TO THE CLEAN SIDE OF THE PIT AND THE FENCE IS LOWERED! THEN THE CAGE CLEANERS DESCEND ONCE MORE
OKAY, MR COOGAN! HOW'S IT LOOK?
FINE! JUST FINE! THANK YOU, LOU!

THAT NIGHT OLD 'CRAZY COOGAN' SITS ON THE PIT EDGE, SMILING DOWN AT HIS FRIENDS
I'VE TREATED YOU WELL, MY FRIENDS, HAVEN'T I? I'VE LOOKED AFTER YOU! YOU KNOW ME... DON'T YOU?


WHILE FAR ACROSS TOWN...
I TELL YOU, SAM, IT'S GOT ME STUMPED! NORM WAS ALWAYS A GOOD HUSBAND TO DIANE...BUT LEAVING HER LIKE THIS...
YEAH, ED! YOU KNOW, THERE MUST BE AN EPIDEMIC! JACK DILBY'S WIFE'S LOOKIN' FOR HIM, TOO!

NO KIDDIN? HE DISAPPEAR, TOO? SAY! THERE'S SOMETHING MIGHTY STRANGE GOIN' ON!
GIMME A BEER, SAM!

OH...HI, LOU! HOW'S THE CAGE-CLEANING GOIN'?
PRETTY FAIR! HAD A TOUGH ONE TODAY.
HEY!

WHERE'D YOU GET THAT RING? THAT'S NORMAN'S RING!
WHY, I FOUND IT!

DON'T LIE TO ME! YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS! TELL ME, BEFORE I BREAK YOU IN TWO!
HONEST, ED! I FOUND THE RING IN THE CROCODILE PIT! WE CLEANED IT THIS AFTERNOON! 'CRAZY COOGAN'

'CRAZY COOGAN'! DO—DO YOU SUPPOSE...?
OILBY! JACK DILBY'S MISSIN', TOO!
C'MON! LET'S GO! LET'S TALK TO COOGAN...

AS THE ANGRY MEN FROM THE BAR ENTER THE ZOO GROUNDS...
LOOK! COOGAN'S UP AHEAD!
HE'S CARRYIN' SOMETHIN'!
A BODY!
HE'S HEADED FOR THE CROCODILE-PIT!
COOGAN! CRAZY COOGAN!
HUH?
THE STARTLED ZOO-KEEPER DROPS HIS LATEST VICTIM AND BEGINS TO RUN! THE TOWNSMEN ARE CLOSE ON HIS HEELS...
NO USE TRYIN' TO GET AWAY, 'CRAZY'! WE'LL GET YOU!
NO YOU WON'T! NO YOU WON'T...
MR. COOGAN RUSHES UP TO THE CROCODILE-PIT...
MY CROCODILES! THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF ME! THEY'LL PROTECT ME! THEY LOVE ME...
COOGAN! DON'T!
'CRAZY COOGAN' CLIMBS TO THE EDGE OF THE CROCODILE PIT... HESITATES FOR A MINUTE... THEN LEAPS IN...
HE.. HE JUMPED!
HE'S... MAD!
THE HORRIFIED MEN RUSH UP TO THE PIT-EDGE AND STARE DOWN! THE FEROCIOUS CROCODILES ARE THRASHING ABOUT.. RIPPING AND TEARING! FROM THEIR VICTIM COME THE BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS OF DEATH...
OUGH!
GOOD LORD!
HOW..HOW HORRIBLE!
HEE, HEE! WELL, KIDDIES! THAT'S MY STORY! OLD 'CRAZY COOGAN'S' FRIENDS DID TAKE CARE OF HIM.. VERY WELL! WHICH REMINDS ME! PERHAPS YOU KNOW OF A ZOO THAT'S LOOKING FOR SOME MAN-EATING CROCODILES? I KNOW WHERE THERE ARE SOME FOR SALE... CHEAP, TOO! ONLY ONE THING! THEY'RE MIGHTY HUNGRY! THEY HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING SINCE COOGAN! AND NOW, TURN TO THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER! HE'LL TELL YOU HOW TO OBTAIN BACK ISSUES FROM US GHOULUNATICS..

THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

President and CEO—Stephen A. Gappi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear Vault-Keeper

Issues 7 and 8 of VAULT were great! Both of your stories in VAULT #7 ("Sink Hole!" and "The Mask of Horror") were terrific. I've recently subscribed to VAULT and I am wondering if there are any zombie stories coming up. zombie stories are my favorite kind of stories.

I thought Johnny Craig's art on the covers of VAULT 7 and 8 was great. Are there any Vault-Keeper collectibles out there? Ghoulishly yours,

Corey Dollak — West Hartford, CT

I don't recall another zombie story until issue #17, but if it makes you feel better there's about a jillion revived-corpse stories between now and then! You'd think a GhouLunatic who delivers the goods like that rates a figurine—and will, in January! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I absolutely love your stories. I'm ten years old. I was wondering if you would send me a personalized picture of yourself?

Turner Brinton — Elkton, MD

Nope. —VK

Dear Vault Keeper

I love your comics the most...but I also like CRYPT, HAUNT and SHOCK. I have one question. I watch the "Tales from the Crypt" show on TV and I wanted to know if The Crypt-Keeper uses some of your stories, because in VAULT 5 you had a story called "Fitting Punishment" and about two weeks ago that story was on TV.

Catherine Ankony — Grosse Ile, MI

Heh, heh! That old Crypt-Creep is caught with his plots down! Yes, he steals from me, The Old Witch, and even from the SuspenStory titles, SHOCK and CRIME. —VK

Hi VK!

My name is James and I live in a boring, sweltering dust bowl where the only excitement found is in your mag! Please brighten my life and give me a response. It would be excellent to hear from a GhouLunatic, which I aspire to be someday. Maybe you can give me some pointers.

By the way, VK, not to bring up that bone head, CK, but how come you can't fill in for him on the show every once in a while? Give his sorry tales a rest for a while and give the viewers an even better reason to watch.

GhouLunatic wannabee

James Farr — Owasso, OK

Trade in that Oklahoma dust for MUMMY dust, and you're on your way! I tried to fill in for CK once, but went into the wrong studio. Wound up on "X-Files." (No one even noticed!) —VK

Dear Vault Keeper...

It's great to see the evolution of horror in VAULT #9 was just what my doctor (Demento) ordered. I really enjoyed the fine Johnny Craig cover and his lead story "About Face!" The Davis story, "The Reluctant Vampire!" was sad. I felt sorry for Mr. Drink—what a way to get a meal! The Kamen and Ingels stories were also top-notch.

EC readers may be interested in "The Monster Show," a new book (1993) by David J. Skal. He calls EC "the most influential and imitated (but not the most numerous) " horror comics.

Skal also mentions that "the leading foe of horror comics was Dr. Fredric Wertham, a Gramercy Park psychiatrist who, coincidentally, had been imported to America from Germany about the same time as 'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari' in the early twenties." He goes on to compare Wertham with the vampire Nosferatu, which is appropriate since, in a sense, Wertham helped suck the life out of the horror books. I find it ironic that although Dr. Wertham no longer walks among us, EC lives on. Your reprints are the best. Thanks again.

David C. Dalin — Tacoma, WA

Here, now! Let's not be badmouthing Caligari and Nosferatu! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I think you're the best! VAULT #8 was the best, especially "Reunion!" It was the best. Compared to those other two guys you're the best.

Ray Taylor, age 11 — Vienna, IL

[GUYS!! Hmphh! —OW]

Dear Russ Cochran

I just wanted to take the time out and thank you for republishing comic books worth reading. You printed them at a time in my life when I was searching for the right comic book that was old fashioned fun. Thank you again.

Jana Buterbaugh — Columbus, OH

And when N comes to fashioning fun, no one's older than I am—wait, that's not quite what I meant!! —VK

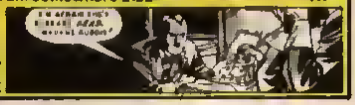
Dear VK,

I just bought VAULT #9 and I have to say that I LOVE your comic books! You are MUCH better than CK and OW (though I must admit I read their comic books too). Do you come up with the ideas for your stories yourself, or do you have other people do it for you?

Also, please include my address, because I would really love to have a horror and/or comic book fan pen pal (I'm really into both). I'm 16. Your ghoulish friend,

Holly Jarratt — 1418 Independence CH RD, Emporia, VA 23847

I admit to using a Dicta-phone, but other than that what you get is straight from the horse's mouth. In the cases of OW and CK, well, let's just say N's straight from somewhere else. —VK



NEXT ISSUE

Mr. Russ Cochran,

I must say the one thing you probably hear in all of your letters. I am one of your biggest fans. I have about eighteen of your comic books and about forty taped HBO "Crypt"s.

I wasn't going to bore you with all [this] until I read VAULT #9. In the first story, it asked the fans to write letters. I was really excited. I have only come across one person in my small town who is as into [this] as me. My friend and I called every Wednesday and Saturday. T F T C. Days. Every Wednesday we met at her house to watch the series on at 10. Every Saturday, we met at my house to watch the re-run of Wednesday's show. Never missed a day.

You could see why I was so excited to get a VCR. I now have two and a half full tapes of the half hour madness and mayhem. I have also seen the music video with the good old Crypt-Keeper. Now, the little plastic figurines. I plan to get one even though I am 16.

I am also a faithful reader of only Steven King, Dean Koontz, and Ann Rice. I am pretty picky when it comes to gore.

I have seen the offers in the back of some of my comics referring to subscribing. I'm not sure if that is out-dated in my older issues or if it still stands. And, is it true that you start getting your subscription from the very first issue? I would love more than anything to subscribe or have more of a collection that I already have.

Melissa Rhoden — Honolulu, HI

Remember, CK has the TV show, but it was ME who wanted your letters! See sub ed, last page. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I just thought you should know that I read your ridiculous pledge. There is no way I'm reciting that. I would be betraying The Crypt-Keeper.

You said that your stories make CK's look like rejects from "The Babysittere Club." If so, why does he have his own show and you don't? You can think that your stories are better, but the Crypt-Keeper is more popular.

I did enjoy one of your stories. It is called "Daddy Lost His Head!!" (VAULT #6).

The exact words of the CK were "Now, I'll turn you back to The Vault-Keeper for another slasy-story!" ("Lend Me A Hand!", VAULT #7.)

Tiffany Mignemi — Staten Island, NY

His exact LAST words! —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

After I read one of your stories, I started to think that you were cool! I want to continue reading your scary stories. I think that you're very funny! I am about to read "Grandma's Ghost!!." I just want to know if you are scarier than The Crypt-Keeper. Hey! And you are very funny also. Yes.

Keith Roca, age 13 — Alexandria, VA

Yes. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I recently became a fan of yours. I have one CRYPT mag and one VAULT mag. Do you have HBO or FOX in your Vault? I have a book called "Jokes from the Crypt." Your chapter in the book is my favorite! I just got done with VAULT #9! My favorite story was "About Face! "!! It was great!! Keep up the good work!

Justin Winkelman — Sioux City, IA

I don't have cable, but I do have a dish on the roof. I eat up there. —VK

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I just ready VAULT #6 and I really liked "Daddy Lost His Head!!", and "Reunion!". Are The OW and The CK your brother and sister, and do you fight with each other? Are you married and do you have any kids?

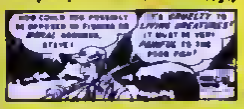
I have the CK action figure. It is not fair that there are no VK and OW action figures. I love EC comics. I have just two issues of EC comics. Of course I just came from Poland.

I would love to have a pen-pal so please print my address.

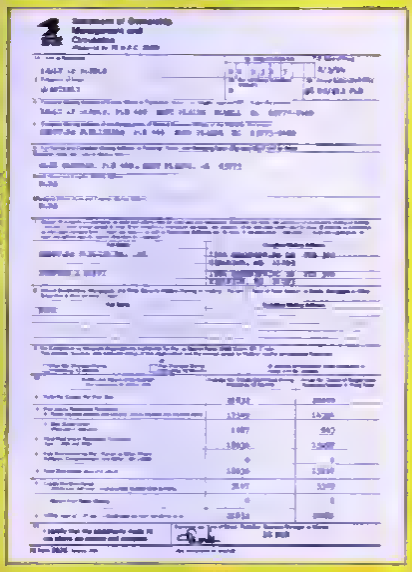
My sister likes your comics too. And she's 20. I would love to be a vampire.

Dominik Zaurzewski — 61-27 56 RD, Maspeth, NY 11378

What?! Sibling to those simpering simpletons? Not on your genotype. (You just think you'd love being a vampire; the hours are lousy!) —VK



NEXT ISSUE



Also available this month are WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED TALES. Watch for HAUNT, INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION and CRIME next month. Don't forget CRYPT, WEIRD SCIENCE and SHOCK. Get them at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic)!

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1 (subject to availability), $8 each. All others up thru issue #9, $1.50 each. Issues #4 and up, $2 each. Add $6 per order ($10 outside US) for S&H.

We want letters! Write to:
VAULT
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 488
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

THIS COMIC REPRINTS
VAULT OF HORROR "#21" (#10, OCT/NOV 61)

COVER by Johnny Craig

"One Last Fling!"	Johnny Craig
"That's a 'Croc'!"	Howard Larsen
"Child's Play"	Jack Kamen
"Trapped!"	Jack Davis

We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, accuracy and length. We occasionally withhold street address and zip code (except city, state) you wish from publication. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the individual letter.

More items of general EC interest, collected into this special column called...

FAN CLUB NEWS! #8

PRESENTED BY THE VAULT-KEEPER

Mistake department: "The Gray Cloud of Death!" (WS 9) four guys cross from the Venus-2 to the Venus-1 there's a long flash-back, and—the guy in the green space suit is never seen again. The gray cloud got him! I guess abut no one else even notices he is gone. "Voodoo Death!" (CRYPT 7), splash panel, there is no such island as Haiti! It's an independent nation occupying about the western fourth of the island of Hispaniola. The rest is taken up by the Dominican Republic. "Hounded to Death!" (HAUNT 8): so the pudgy middle-aged husband dragged the alleged dead boy friend off and flung him over a fence higher than his head? Oh, yeah. I'm sure.

As for "The Raven." I don't necessarily see that my interpretation invalidates any previous ones. I am sorry to say I missed Poe's own explanation of it but am not surprised it should be facetious, because to me it is clear the whole poem was meant as a burlesque from the start. The real argument, I think, depends not on Domitian or Suetonius, but Graves' comment about the raven symbolism as medieval art and those same artists (Bosch e.g.) used the owl not as a symbol of wisdom as we now think it, but as an evil omen. So symbols change, and sometimes, those that use them change them. So pigeons on the grass alas to Mark Bernstein.

"The Very Strange Mummy!" (HAUNT 8) deserves a certain immorality, too. How can ya top the kutzpah of a *vampire mummy??*

Dave Hall — Seattle, WA

How about the chutzpah of a Dave Hall, for starters! —VK

Pause. Reading through the lettercolumns, I'd have to agree with John Miller's comments about the diversity in 50s science-fiction comics. The DC tales produced some memorable characters and while I've never read the Charlton ones, I think I can say with some measure of truth that the ECs were the most daring. After all, some Senate subcommittee didn't ban any words from those companies' titles! Those people, thinking "Weird" was offensive. If only they knew that the word would become a part of American kids' and teens' slang scant years later. As for the DC sci-fi books, they still seemed to reek of the superhero touch. Now I just wonder what would have happened if Bill Gaines tackled the superhero genre, we might have had intense, guilt-driven good guys thirty years earlier!

Thanks for your time and keep up the good work. But with a new snazzy name like Gemstone, why don't we see a logo on the front cover? C mon!

Joey Marchese — Clark, NJ

We want to do the absolute minimum in altering the EC covers; we feel a new colophon would be going too far. (Hey, Ed, what's a colophon?) —VK

Dear Russ,

I read a reprint of something you wrote a while ago, saying you wished you'd kept your old battered written-on, original ECs because in their way they were better than mint copies. I promptly stopped a year-old "up-grade" of my collection and am glad I did.

Russ, just between you and me, here are some facts since you printed my first letter. I have received 84 applications for the EC REGISTER, of which 26 eventually sent in $5 subscriptions to GOOD LORD! I've gotten out three issues and am especially proud of the last one.

As you have seen, GOOD LORD! is 95% reader input, with a heavy slant toward collectors and collecting, rather than critique-ing and analyzing EC stories, a field well covered in your great mags.

Anyone may join the EC REGISTER by sending a stamp. New members will receive the latest issue of GOOD LORD!, our HORRIBLE new fanzine/newsletter (our FOURTH big ish is about to appear!) Or better yet, send $7.00 right now for a one-year (four-issue) subscription.

Lifetime membership in the EC REGISTER is absolutely free, just send a stamp to Abner Doon Productions, 8801 Atlantic Avenue, Margate City, New Jersey, 08402, for info.

Christopher Cook Gilmore

Dear CRYPT/VAULT/HAUNT

Thanks for your fantastic new reprints. I collect all the horror, science and thriller issues. No mean feat considering how hard they are to obtain here in England.

Anyway, on to the main point of my letter: recently while reading a guide to world comics, I came across a chapter on 3D comics of years past and a couple of lines about an EC comics called THREE DIMENSIONAL E.C. CLASSICS and a follow up THREE DIMENSIONAL TALES FROM THE CRYPT, both issued around later 53-early 54. Could you please tell me more about the above two comics and their contents as I have never heard you mention them before and is there any chance of re-printing them?

P. Harris — Cumbria, GB

I answered some of your questions in "News" #6 (see HAUNT #9, et al), as to the contents, they had already-published EC stories in them—some sources say "redrawn" but my memory is the art was based on the 2D version and the additional layers for depth were fresh "redrawings." A lot of work, Jack! —VK

Dear Russ,

Aha! Tracked you down! Greetings! You might not remember me but I wrote you once at Gladstone regarding the good "headlights" you had put on some Disney (!) character. (What was her name? Melissa? Miranda? Well something like that.)

So why am I writing? Just to say hello and wish you luck. I see you have taken over the (formerly) Gladstone line of horror and science fiction comics. (That's how I found out your address.) Hope the new endeavor is working out.

By the way, as a kid I mainly read Disney and Little Lulu comics. I especially loved the works of Carl Barks, but like so many at the time, did not know his name. Once in a while I would get hold of a Superman or Batman comic. I liked these OK, but generally saved my money for the Barks and Lulus. Very rarely would I read a horror comic in those days. I am not sure whether I really disliked them *per se*, or whether I was influenced by the prevailing opinion that only bad or sick boys read them.

So what do you think? Were/are they bad for young kids? It seems improbable in view of some of the things kids watch on TV, but then maybe both are bad? (Getting conservative in my old age?) So what do you think?

Vladimir Dvornychenko — South Pasadena, CA

I'll rack our horror comics up against terrorvision and emotin' pictures anytime! And come up smellin' like a rose! (Or the mulch thereof! Heh, heh!) —CK]

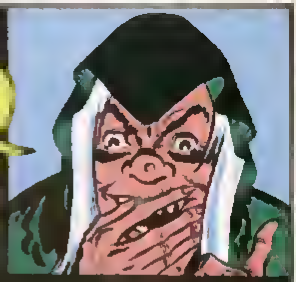
Back off, formaldehyde-breath! You're no petunia! Just a...pansy! Heh! —VK

Write to this department like so: FAN CLUB NEWS, RUSS COCHRAN, POB 465, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775.

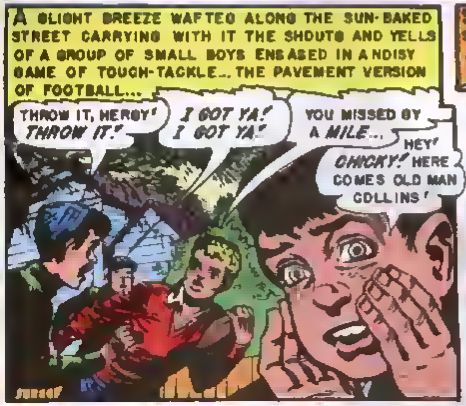
We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We edit for clarity, brevity and length. We automatically withhold street address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. To do so we need your address on the individual letter.

EVER BEEN CHASED AWAY FROM IN FRONT OF THAT MEAN OLD CRABBY GUY'S HOUSE DOWN THE BLOCK? HERE'S WHAT ONE BUNCH OF KIDS DID ABOUT IT! I CALL THIS CHILLER...

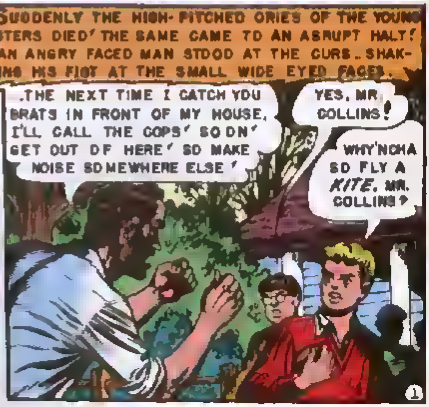
CHILD'S PLAY



A SLIGHT BREEZE WAFTED ALONG THE SUN-BAKED STREET CARRYING WITH IT THE SHOUTS AND YELLS OF A GROUP OF SMALL BOYS ENGAGED IN A NOISY GAME OF TOUCH-TACKLE... THE PAVEMENT VERSION OF FOOTBALL...

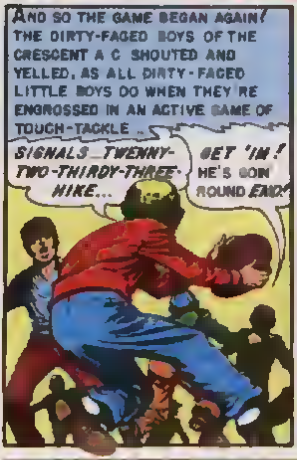


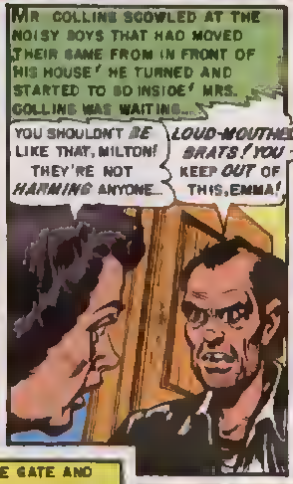
SUDDENLY THE HIGH-PITCHED CRIES OF THE YOUNGSTERS DIED! THE SAME CAME TO AN ABRUPT HALT! AN ANGRY FACED MAN STOOD AT THE CURB... SHAKING HIS FIST AT THE SMALL WIDE EYED FACES...

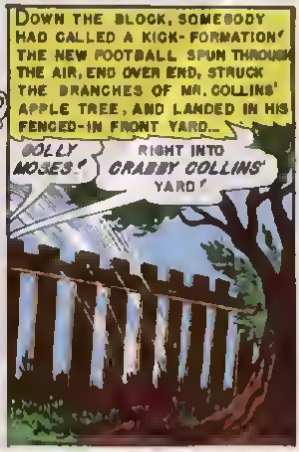


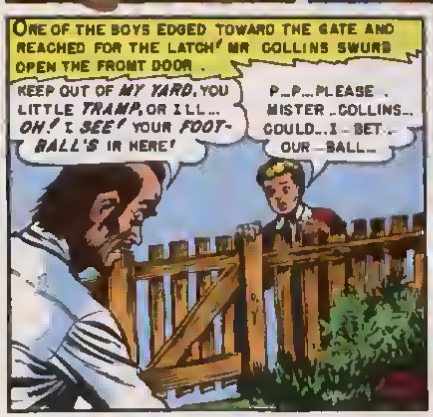
THE SMALL GROUP OF BOYS MOVED SLOWLY DOWN THE STREET GLANCING OVER THEIR SHOULDERS AT THE MENACING MAN...
THE OLD CRAB!
YOU'D THINK HE OWNED THE STREET!
GOLLY! HOW CAN WE BREAK IN OUR NEW CLUB FOOTBALL IF WE CAN'T EVEN PLAY IN THE STREET?

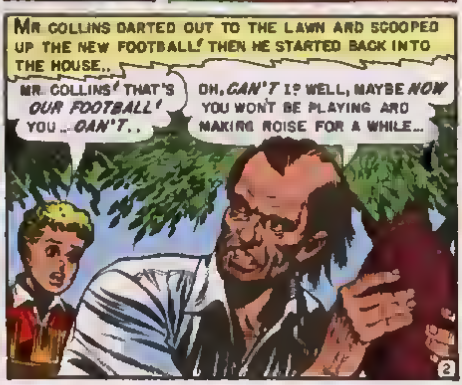
HE CAN'T STOP US IF WE'RE NOT PLAYING IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE!
YEAH! WE'LL JUST MOVE THE GOAL LINES DOWN A-WAYS!
OKAY! LET'S SEE! WE'LL MAKE IT... THAT TREE... AND THIS FIRE-PLUG!


AND SO THE GAME BEGAN AGAIN! THE DIRTY-FACED BOYS OF THE CRESCENT A C SHOUTED AND YELLED, AS ALL DIRTY-FACED LITTLE BOYS DO WHEN THEY'RE ENGROSSED IN AN ACTIVE GAME OF TOUCH-TACKLE...
SIGNALS... TWENNY-TWO-THIRDY-THREE-HIKE...
GET 'IM! HE'S GOIN ROUND END!


MR COLLINS SCOWLED AT THE NOISY BOYS THAT HAD MOVED THEIR GAME FROM IN FRONT OF HIS HOUSE! HE TURNED AND STARTED TO GO INSIDE! MRS. COLLINS WAS WAITING...
YOU SHOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT, MILTON! THEY'RE NOT HARMING ANYONE...
LOUD-MOUTHED BRATS! YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS, EMMA!

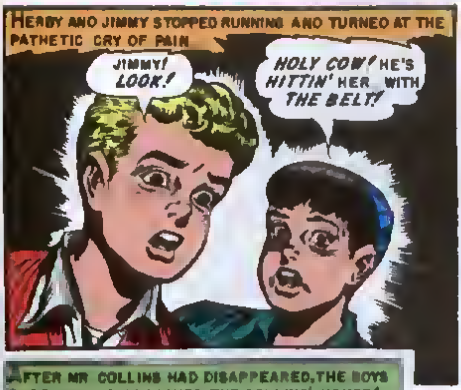

DOWN THE BLOCK, SOMEBODY HAD CALLED A KICK-FORMATION! THE NEW FOOTBALL SPUN THROUGH THE AIR, END OVER END, STRUCK THE BRANCHES OF MR. COLLINS' APPLE TREE, AND LANDED IN HIS FENCED-IN FRONT YARD...
GOLLY MOSES!
RIGHT INTO CRABBY COLLINS' YARD!

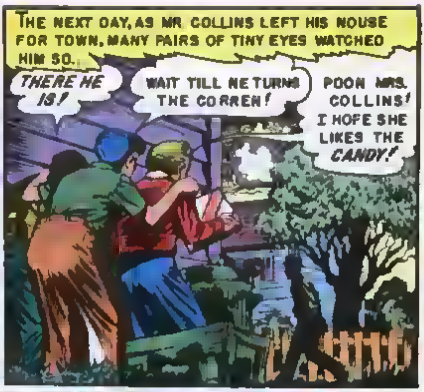

ONE OF THE BOYS EDGED TOWARD THE GATE AND REACHED FOR THE LATCH! MR COLLINS SWUNG OPEN THE FRONT DOOR.
KEEP OUT OF MY YARD, YOU LITTLE TRAMP, OR I'LL... OH! I SEE! YOUR FOOTBALL'S IN HERE!
P...P... PLEASE, MISTER.. COLLINS... COULD... I - BET.. OUR - BALL...

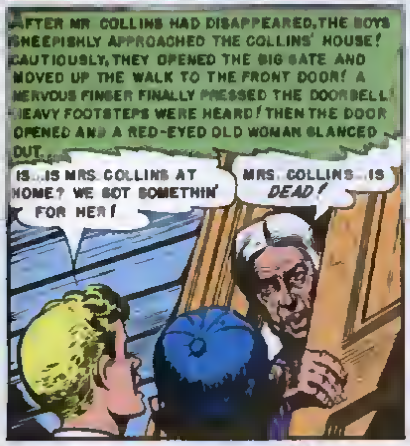

MR COLLINS DARTED OUT TO THE LAWN AND SCOOPED UP THE NEW FOOTBALL! THEN HE STARTED BACK INTO THE HOUSE...
MR. COLLINS! THAT'S OUR FOOTBALL! YOU... CAN'T...
OH, CAN'T I? WELL, MAYBE NOW YOU WON'T BE PLAYING AND MAKING NOISE FOR A WHILE...

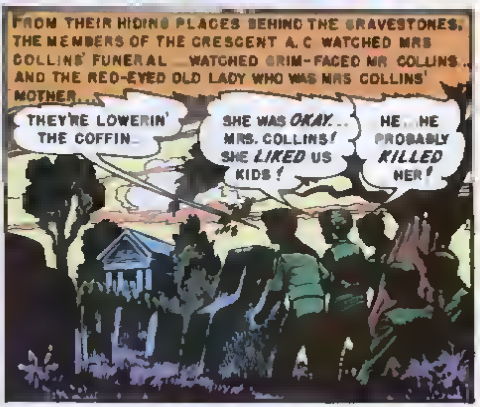
MR COLLINE DISAPPEARED INTO THE HOUSE WITH THE CREECENT A C'S FOOTBALL...
HE...HE TOOK IT! HE WON'T GIVE IT BACK!
I'M GOING TO TELL MY OL' MAN WHER HE GETS HOME!
THE DIRTY RAT!
THE EAD-FACED YOUNGSTERS HUND AROUND OUTSIOE THE COLLINS' HOUSE...HELPLESS! AFTER AN HOUR OR SO, THE FRORT DOOR OPENED AND MRE COLLINS CAME OUT! SHE HAD THE FOOTBALL
SHH-H! HE'S ASLEEP! HERE! HERE'E YOUR FOOT-BALL!
GEE, MNE COLLINS! THANKS!
YOU'RE SUPER!
THE BOYS RAN HAPPILY DOWN THE STREET WITH THEIR RETURNED PRIZE! MRE COLLINS EIGHED AS EHE WATCHED THEM DIEAPPEAR AROUND THE CORNEN! THEN SHE WENT BACE INEIDE...
OH! MILTON! YOU STARTLED ME!
YOU SAVE IT BACK, DIDN'T YOU, EMMA? DIDN'T YOU?
MILTON COLLINS SWUNG OUT, SAVAGELY STRIKING HIS WIFE ACROSS THE FACE.
DWWW!
MAYBE THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
THE NEXT DAY, TWO OF THE BOYS STOOD AT THE COLLINS' FENCE, GAZING UP AT THE RED APPLES THAT HUNG RIPE AND JUICY.. ON THE TREE IN THE COLLINS' YARD.
SEE, HENSY! THEY LOOK GOOD, DON'T THEY?
MMMM! AND HE NEVER PICKS 'EM! HE JUST LETS THEM FALL OR THE GROUND AND ROT!
SURE IS A WASTE, HUH? BET THEY TASTE SCRUMPTIOUS!
I'LL TOSS YOU FOR WHO GOES IN ARD SWIPES A COUPLE!
THE BOTTLE TOP FLIPPED UP IRTO THE COOL SUMMER AIR ARD CAME OOWN! HERSY'S FACE FELL! HE'D LOST! HE MOVED TO THE GATE CAUTIOUSLY.
YOU EING OUT IF YOU SEE HIM, HUH, JIMMY?
DON'T WORRY, HERSY! GO AHEAD! DON'T BE YELLOW!
3

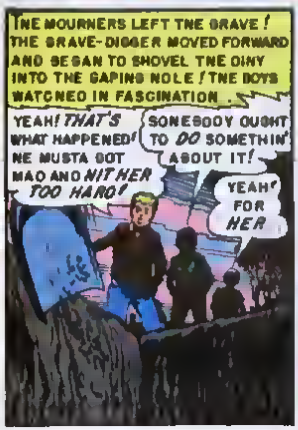
HERBY LIFTED THE LATCH AND THE GATE GREAKED OPEN! HE TIF-TOED TO THE THEE AND LOOKED UP! THE APPLES HUNG TEMPTINGLY ABOVE HIS OUTSTHETCHED HAND...
I CAH'T HEACH 'EM!
SEE IF THERE'S A STICK AROUND!
HERBY BEGAH TO HUNT ARDUHD THE YARD FOH A STICK TO KNOCK THE APPLES DOWN WITH! SUDDEHLY JIMMY SHOUTED IN DISMAY...
CHICKY!
HUH?
LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?
IT WAS OLD GRABBY MH. COLLINS! HE GLAHED DOWH AT THE FRIGHT-ENED LITTLE BOY...
I, I WAS I, I ...
SO YOU WERE GOING TO PICK MY APPLES, EH?
MH COLLINS UNBUCKLED HIS BELT AND SLID IT OUT FROM THE TROUSER LOOPS...
WELL, I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU A LESSON ABOUT STEALING.
I ... WASH'T GOIHG TO ...STEAL THEM, MH. COLLINS! YOU HEVER PICK THEM!
MH. COLLINS HAISED THE LEATHEH STHAP! HEHRY SEGAR TO CHY! BUDDEHLY EMMA COLLINS RAH OUT FROM THE HOUSE...
MILTON! PUT DOWN THAT BELT! DON'T YOU DARE HIT THAT CHILD!
EMMA! SET BACK IH THE HOUSE!
RUH, HEHRY! RUH!
HERBY STREAKED OUT OF THE YARD! MR COLLINS SCREAMED AFTEH HIM...
COME BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE THIEF!
THEH MR. COLLINS' SPUN ARDUHD FACING HIS WIFE! HIS FACE WAS FLUSHED WITH ANGER! HIS EYES BULGED AS HE EXPLODED...
YOU LET HIM GET AWAY! YOU HAD TO STICK YOUR NOSE IH! WELL, I'LL SHOW YOU...
NO, MILTON! NO!
4


HERBY AND JIMMY STOPPED RUNNING AND TURNED AT THE PATHETIC CRY OF PAIN
JIMMY! LOOK!
HOLY COW! HE'S HITTIN' HER... WITH THE BELT!


THE NEXT DAY, AS MR. COLLINS LEFT HIS HOUSE FOR TOWN, MANY PAIRS OF TINY EYES WATCHED HIM SO...
THERE HE IS!
WAIT TILL HE TURNS THE CORNER!
POOR MRS. COLLINS! I HOPE SHE LIKES THE CANDY!

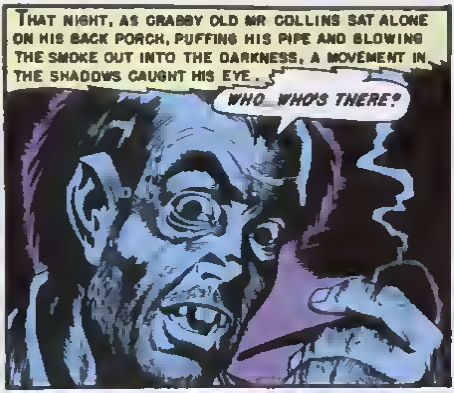

AFTER MR. COLLINS HAD DISAPPEARED, THE BOYS SHEEPISHLY APPROACHED THE COLLINS' HOUSE! CAUTIOUSLY, THEY OPENED THE BIG GATE AND MOVED UP THE WALK TO THE FRONT DOOR! A NERVOUS FINGER FINALLY PRESSED THE DOORBELL! HEAVY FOOTSTEPS WERE HEARD! THEN THE DOOR OPENED AND A RED-EYED OLD WOMAN GLANCED OUT...
IS...IS MRS. COLLINS AT HOME? WE GOT SOMETHIN' FOR HER!
MRS. COLLINS...IS DEAD!

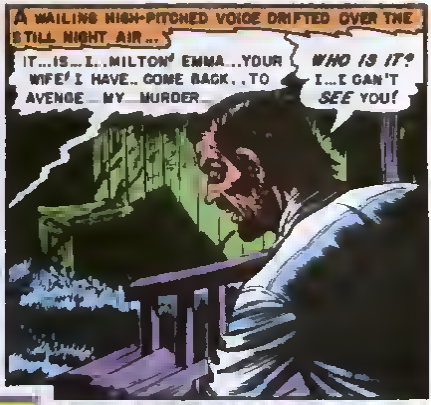

FROM THEIR HIDING PLACES BEHIND THE GRAVESTONES, THE MEMBERS OF THE CRESCENT A.C. WATCHED MRS. COLLINS' FUNERAL... WATCHED GRIM-FACED MR. COLLINS... AND THE RED-EYED OLD LADY WHO WAS MRS. COLLINS' MOTHER...
THEY'RE LOWERIN' THE COFFIN...
SHE WAS OKAY... MRS. COLLINS! SHE LIKED US KIDS!
HE...HE PROBABLY KILLED HER!

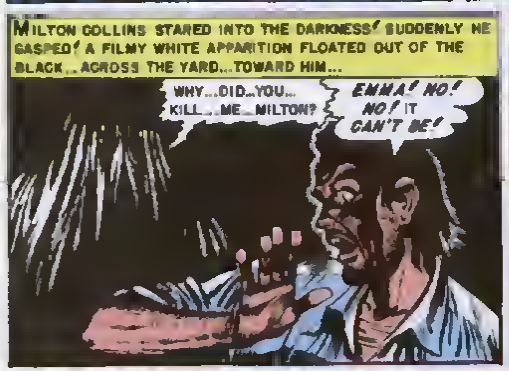

THE MOURNERS LEFT THE GRAVE! THE GRAVE-DIGGER MOVED FORWARD AND BEGAN TO SHOVEL THE DIRT INTO THE GAPING HOLE! THE BOYS WATCHED IN FASCINATION...
YEAH! THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED! HE MUSTA GOT MAD AND HIT HER TOO HARD!
SOMEBODY OUGHT TO DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT IT!
YEAH! FOR HER

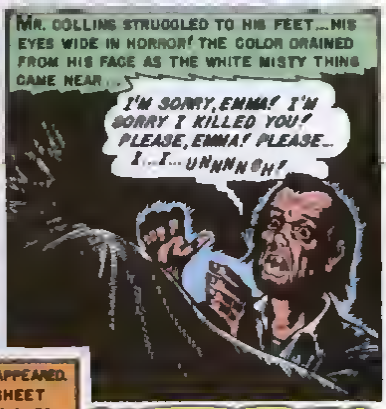
HEY! I GOT AN IDEA! BOY... THIS COULD SCARE THE PANTS OFF MR. COLLINS!
WHAT IS IT?
C'MON, HERBY! GIVE OUT!

HERBY OUTLINED HIS PLAN.
HEY, THAT'S GREAT! I'LL DO IT!
NO! ME! I WANT TO!
WE'LL DRINK LOTS!


THAT NIGHT, AS CRABBY OLD MR COLLINS SAT ALONE ON HIS BACK PORCH, PUFFING HIS PIPE AND BLOWING THE SMOKE OUT INTO THE DARKNESS, A MOVEMENT IN THE SHADOWS CAUGHT HIS EYE..
WHO... WHO'S THERE?

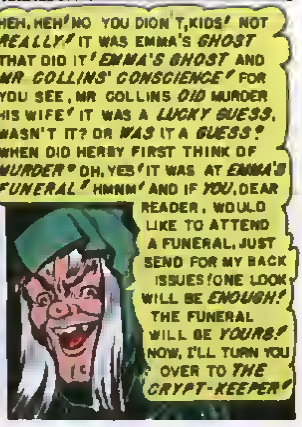

A WAILING HIGH-PITCHED VOICE DRIFTED OVER THE STILL NIGHT AIR...
IT...IS...I...MILTON! EMMA...YOUR WIFE! I HAVE.. COME BACK.. TO AVENGE... MY... MURDER...
WHO IS IT? I...I CAN'T SEE YOU!


MILTON COLLINS STARED INTO THE DARKNESS! SUDDENLY HE GASPED! A FILMY WHITE APPARITION FLOATED OUT OF THE BLACK... ACROSS THE YARD... TOWARD HIM...
WHY...DID...YOU... KILL... ME... MILTON?
EMMA! NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE!


MR. COLLINS STRUGGLED TO HIS FEET... HIS EYES WIDE IN HORROR! THE COLOR DRAINED FROM HIS FACE AS THE WHITE MISTY THING CAME NEAR...
I'M SORRY, EMMA! I'M SORRY I KILLED YOU! PLEASE, EMMA! PLEASE... I...I... UNNNNOH!

MR. COLLINS PITCHED FORWARD AND FELL FACE DOWNWARD ON THE BACK YARD DIRT! SUDDENLY A HOLE OPENED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GHOSTLY FIGURE AND A FACE PEERED OUT...
HEY! MR. COLLINS! IT...IT'S JUST A GAG! IT'S ME! HERBY!

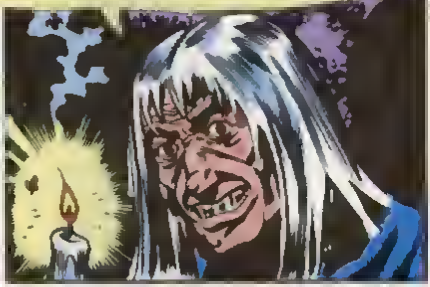
OTHER TERRIFIED BOYS APPEARED. SOMEONE STRIPPED THE SHEET FROM WHERE IT HAD HUNG OVER THE BALLOON ON THE STICK TIED TO HERBY'S BACK! ANOTHER BENT AND EXAMINED MR. COLLINS...
HE... HE'S DEAD!
WE... WE SCARED HIM TO DEATH!


HEH, HEH! NO YOU DION'T, KIDS! NOT REALLY! IT WAS EMMA'S GHOST THAT DID IT! EMMA'S GHOST AND MR COLLINS' CONSCIENCE! FOR YOU SEE, MR COLLINS DID MURDER HIS WIFE! IT WAS A LUCKY GUESS, WASN'T IT? OR WAS IT A GUESS? WHEN DID HERBY FIRST THINK OF MURDER? OH, YES! IT WAS AT EMMA'S FUNERAL! HMMM! AND IF YOU, DEAR READER, WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND A FUNERAL, JUST SEND FOR MY BACK ISSUES! ONE LOOK WILL BE ENOUGH! THE FUNERAL WILL BE YOURS! NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE CRYPT-KEEPER!

THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! WELL! NOW ..FINALLY IT'S MY TURN TO 'ENTERTAIN' YOU! IF YOU CAN STILL MOVE, COME INTO *THE CRYPT OF TERROR!* I AM YOUR HOST — *THE CRYPT-KEEPER!* SO YOU HAVEN'T HAD *ENOUGH HORROR*, EH? WELL, I'LL FIX *THAT!* THIS TIME I'VE CHOSEN FROM MY VAST COLLECTION OF *TERROR-TALES* — ONE THAT I'M SURE YOU'LL ENJOY! I CALL THIS *GRIPPING* YARN ..

TRAPPED!



MARTY ROLLED OVER AND OPENED HIS EYES! HE LOOKED OUT OF THE FREIGHT-CAR DOOR AT THE DARK COUNTRY-SIDE SLIPPING BY! THE STEADY CLACK-CLACK OF THE WHEELS ROARED IN HIS EARS! SUDDENLY HE HEARD A VOICE! HE REACHED FOR THE LITTLE BLACK BAG INSTINCTIVELY

MARTY CLUTCHED THE BLACK BAG AND STUDIED THE NEWCOMER' OUTSIDE, THE TRAIN WHISTLE ECHOED INTO THE NIGHT..
MY NAME'S HARRISON, STRANGER.. BUD HARRISON' WHAT'S YOURS?
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS'
THE SHABBILY DRESSED MAN CALLED HARRISON SOT TO HIS FEET AND STOOD GAZING OUT OF THE SPEEDING FREIGHT-CAR
OKAY, STRANGER' NO HARM' I WAS JUST TRYIN' TO BE FRIENDLY'
WHERE WHEREABOUTS ARE WE?
SEE THEM MOUNTAINS? THEM'S THE SMOKYS' THAT'S OLD BALOY OUT THERE' THIS HERE'S BAD COUNTRY'
BAD COUNTRY.. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HARRISON WAVED HIS ARM TOWARD THE BLACK MOUNTAINS SLIPPING BY..
THIS HERE'S HAUNTED COUNTRY' NOBODY LIVES ROUND HERE' THE LAND'S BEWITCHED.. CURSED..
BAH' SUPERSTITION'
THE RAGGED STRANGER STARED AT MARTY HIS EYES WIDE
I KNOW THESE PARTS, MISTER' TAIN'T NO SUPERSTITION' THAT'S FACT' THE SMOKYS IS FULL
LISTEN' WHAT WAS THAT?
THE DULL THUDDING OF FOOTSTEPS ON THE ROOF OF THE FREIGHT BOOMED THROUGH THE CAR' THE MAN NAMED HARRISON LEANED OUT OF THE OPEN DOORWAY LOOKED UP THEN DUCKED BACK INSIDE BREATHING HARD
IT'S A RAILROAD DICK'
WHA..? WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE' HE'LL PINCH US
AS THE TRAIN WHISTLE WHINED INTO THE NIGHT, TWO SHADOWY FIGURES LEAPED FROM THE SPEEDING FREIGHT
HEY, YOU TWO.

MARTY COVERED THE OLD MAN'S BODY WITH A TARPAULIN! THEN HE FELL EXHAUSTED INTO A RICKETY CHAIR! THE CLIMB UP THE MOUNTAIN HAD BEEN TIRING! SUDDENLY, A BUZZING FLY BEGAN TO CIRCLE HIS HEAD...

SHOO, BLASTED BUG...

THE INSISTANT FLY CONTINUED TO ANNOY MARTY DRONING ABOUT ESCAPING HIS WILD SWINGS

DRAT YOU! I'LL TEACH *YOU* TO BOTHER MARTY KING!

MARTY STRUCK OUT AT THE SINGING FLY WITH HIS PRECIOUS BLACK SATCHEL... NARROWLY MISSING IT AS IT ALIGHTED ON THE TABLE! THE BAG SPRUNG OPEN AND HUNDREDS OF RECTANGULAR GREEN BILLS FLOATED TO THE FLOOR..

LOUSY *BUG!* NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE MADE ME DO!

MARTY GOT VERY LITTLE SLEEP THAT NIGHT! THE FLY CONTINUED TO BUZZ ABOUT THE CABIN, ANNOYING HIM UNTIL DAWN CAME! AS THE SUN ROSE OVER THE MOUNTAINS, AND THE MIST STILL HUNG THICK IN THE LOW PLACES, MARTY DRAGGED THE OLD MAN'S BODY OUT TO BURY IT

THERE YOU ARE, YOU OLD GEEZER! A NICE DEEP HOLE IN YOUR *LOVIN' LAND* TO SLEEP IN...

AS HE SHOVELED THE SOFT BLACK DIRT DOWN INTO THE HOLE COVERING THE OLD MAN MARTY SPUN AROUND! THE BUZZING FLY HAD RETURNED! IT HUMMED ABOUT HIS HEAD! MARTY SWIPED AT IT USELESSLY! FINALLY THE HOLE WAS FILLED! MARTY SCREAMED AT THE ANNOYING INSECT

GET AWAY FROM ME, YOU CURSED FLY...

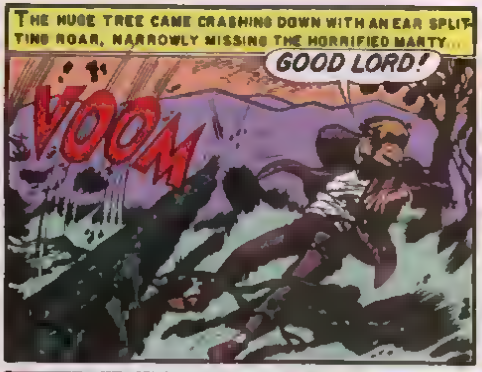
MARTY'S HYSTERICAL SHRIEKING ECHOED OVER THE DESERTED COUNTRYSIDE BACK AND FORTH! HE SHIVERED AT THE SOUND OF HIS OWN VOICE.

GOT TO GET AHOLD OF MYSELF! I'M ALL ON EDGE! IMAGINE.. A LITTLE FLY GETTIN' THE BEST OF ME

THEN MARTY BEGAN TO EXPLORE THE RUDE FARM HE HAD COMMANDEERED! OFF IN THE VALLEY, A BREEZE STIRRED DRIFTED UP THE MOUNTAIN AND WHISTLED THROUGH THE PINES! SUDDENLY AS MARTY STOOD GAZING UP AT ONE OF THE TOWERING TREES...

WHAT THE..?

CRACK

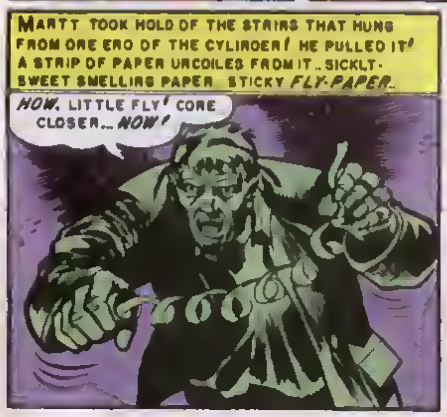

THE HUGE TREE CAME CRASHING DOWN WITH AN EAR SPLITTING ROAR, NARROWLY MISSING THE HORRIFIED MARTY...
GOOD LORD!
VOOM

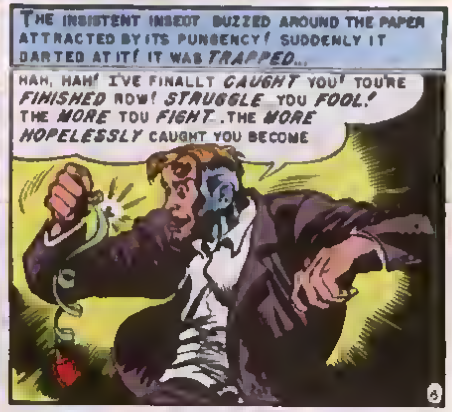
MARTY SCRAMBLED BACK INTO THE CABIN! HE LEANED AGAINST THE DOOR PANTING...
IT..IT'S CURSED! HARRISON WAS RIGHT! THE LAND'S HAUNTED! I.. I'M SCARED...

SUDDENLY, THE DRONING BEGAN AGAIN! THE SINGING HUM OF THE FLY
WHAT THE...? YOU BACK? YOU BACK TO TORMENT ME, TOO?

MARTY RUSHED TO THE CRUDE WOODEN CABINETS AND FLUNG THEM OPEN! HE FUMBLED ABOUT INSIDE THEM LOOKING...SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING...
I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE! IT'S BEWITCHED! BUT FIRST... FIRST I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.. YOU BLASTED FLY!

SUDDENLY MARTY FOUND WHAT HE WAS HUNTING FOR! HE HELD IT IN HIS HAND! A SMALL ROUND CARDBOARD CYLINDER...
HEH, HEH! NOW I'LL GET YOU .. YOU ROTTEN BUG! I'LL MAKE YOU SUFFER AS YOU'VE MADE ME SUFFER


MARTY TOOK HOLD OF THE STRIPS THAT HUNG FROM ONE END OF THE CYLINDER! HE PULLED IT! A STRIP OF PAPER UNCOILED FROM IT..SICKLY-SWEET SMELLING PAPER...STICKY FLY-PAPER.
HOW, LITTLE FLY! COME CLOSER... NOW!


THE INSISTENT INSECT BUZZED AROUND THE PAPER ATTRACTED BY ITS PUNGENCY! SUDDENLY IT DARTED AT IT! IT WAS TRAPPED...
HAH, HAH! I'VE FINALLY CAUGHT YOU! YOU'RE FINISHED NOW! STRUGGLE YOU FOOL! THE MORE YOU FIGHT..THE MORE HOPELESSLY CAUGHT YOU BECOME

MARTY'S LAUGHTER DRIFTED FROM THE CABIN! SOON THE DOOR OPENED AND HE CAME OUT..CLUTCHING THE LITTLE BLACK BAG...

GOT TO GET *AWAY* FROM THIS *CURSED PLACE!* I...I...*WHAT THE...?*

MARTY'S GAZE FELL UPON THE FRESH GRAVE OF THE OLD MAN! THE SOIL OVER IT SEEMED STRANGE...SHINING! MARTY APPROACHED IT...CURIOUSLY...

WHAT IN BLAZES...

MARTY HAD STEPPED ON THE SHINING WET EARTH OVER THE GRAVE! HIS FEET *STUCK* THERE! IT WAS AS IF SOMETHING WERE HOLDING THEM! HE STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF...

I'M...*CAUGHT!* HELP...*HELP...*

AS MARTY STRUGGLED, HE PITCHED FORWARD ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES! THE PRECIOUS BLACK BAG FLEW FROM HIS GRASP! THE CLUTCHING GROUND STUCK TO HIM...LIKE THICK GLUE...

I...I CAN'T GET OUT! THE MORE I TRY, THE WORSE IT GETS ME!

A BREEZE WAFTED THROUGH THE PINES! MARTY, NOW HOPELESSLY COVERED WITH THE FOUL-SMELLING, STRINGY OOZE, BEGAN TO SCREAM...

IT...IT'S LIKE...*FLY-PAPER!*

AAAAAAAAAAGH!

INSIDE THE HOUSE, THE TRAPPED FLY STOPPED ITS FRANTIC STRUGGLING! ITS VIBRATING WINGS... THAT HAD BEEN DRONING A HIGH-PITCHED BUZZ RESEMBLING A SCREAM...STOPPED SINGING! IT LAY THERE...AWARE OF ITS ULTIMATE FATE...

AND OUTSIDE, THE STUFF HAD GOTTEN INTO MARTY'S MOUTH! IT GAGGED HIS SCREAMS INTO SILENCE! THE BREEZE GREW STRONGER! IT WHISTLED THROUGH THE PINES UNTIL IT SOUNDED LIKE LAUGHTER! AND IT CARRIED WITH IT THE HUNDREDS OF LITTLE RECTANGULAR BILLS...

HEH, HEH! YEP! MARTY WAS CAUGHT IN THE *GOO*...BUT GOOD! DON'T YOU WORRY, KIDDIES! REMEMBER WHAT THE OLD MAN SAID BEFORE MARTY KILLED HIM? *NOBODY* COMES TO *THOSE PARTS!* SO MARTY AND THE FLY FACE THE SAME FATE! *DEATH!* WELL...THAT ABOUT WINDS UP THE *VAULT-KEEPER'S* BOOK FOR THIS TIME! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN *THE HAUNT OF FEAR*...WITH MORE TERROR AND HORROR! OH...DON'T FORGET TO READ *THE VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER* IN THIS ISSUE! BYE, NOW!

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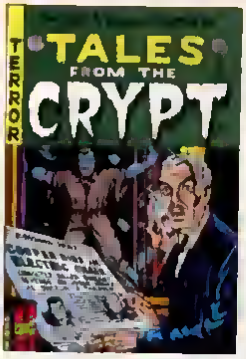

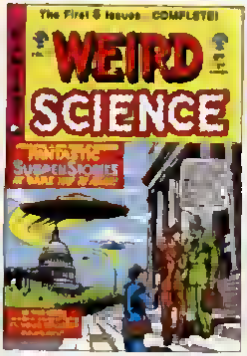

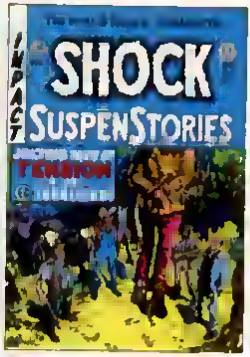

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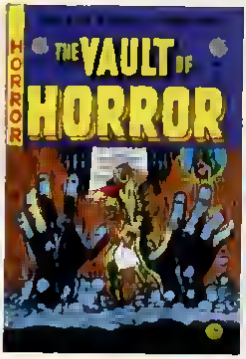

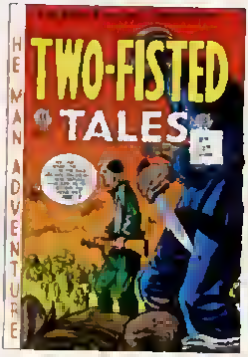

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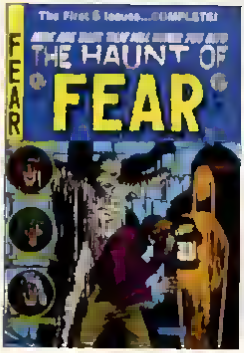

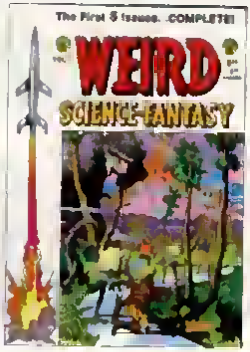

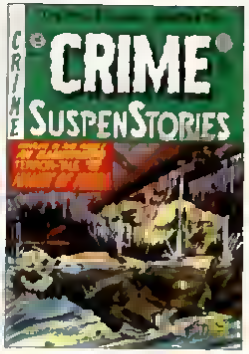

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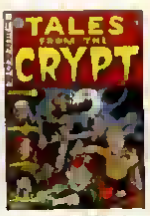

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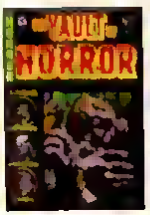

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